

The Coming Day.

AUGUST, 1899.

THE IMMANENT GOD.

SPOKEN AT CROYDON.

He is not far from every one of us.—Acts xvii. 27.

IN the career of a great thought there comes a period when that happens which happens to all great things. It ripens, it is transformed, or it decays, as the seed decays, to give birth to a new growth after its kind. With great vital thoughts, that which nearly always happens is transformation; and the wise man knows that his only safety is in watching and following the transforming process.

Here is the vice or waste of some forms of blatant Radicalism, on the one hand, and of some forms of stupid Conservatism on the other; not only in politics, but in science, in theology and in religion. The children of the market, the workshop and the exchange are wiser. They know it pays to 'improve on the past.' They do not destroy; they perfect. A priceless lesson! What is needed is enough of insight into and sympathy with the past, to give a clear knowledge of the path which has been followed, and firm hold of that which has been reached, and yet enough of ardour and hopefulness to make stagnation impossible, and advance inevitable. We want both: and, if possible, in one man—a union of the poet and the reformer, the prophet and the saint.

Yes, the transformation of a great thought is inevitable; and all the more because of its vastness. Small thoughts appear and pass, and leave few traces; but, in proportion to the greatness of the

thought, will be the need and certainty of transformation: and for an obvious reason. A really great thought is seldom comprehended by its early possessors. It is so in science, in mechanics, in politics, and it must be so in religion. The first great conception in science is a huge crudity. The first ideas of government are sure to be imperfect or even cruel. As time goes on, experience teaches, and the great thoughts are transformed.

Enormously true is this in relation to the thought of God. Andrew Lang thinks that the early thought of God was that of a mighty spirit, and that this lapsed into the worship of ancestors and ghosts. If so, it is at anyrate true that the early ideas of God were entirely anthropomorphic.

But that is perfectly natural. It is inevitable that savage Man should picture God as like himself, only vaster. But everything, the moral qualities included, would be exaggerated in proportion; and, in the end, the God would only be an awful magnified man, and very much on the same moral plane as the magnifier.

The gods of Greece and Rome, Egypt and Persia, were 'gods many and lords many,' because there were devotees many and seekers many, varying in their points of view and in their moral and artistic conditions—for the gods must be like their worshipers.

The Jehovah of the Hebrews, as pictured in the Old Testament, abundantly illustrates this. In fact, there is not one Jehovah in the Old Testament but several. Some pictures of Him there are, as ugly as anything could possibly be: others are extremely beautiful, and still far from being surpassed. The warrior-devotee pictured a warrior-God, and you have his ferocious war-songs in some of the Psalms; but the meditative seer and poet had his lovely shepherd-god; and Him you have in, say, the 23rd Psalm. But if you apply the moral standard, as you ought to do, these are not the same Jehovahs at all.

The same thing is true of the various Christian gods. It is useless to call them by the same name. Judged by moral and spiritual standards (and that is the only way to test the Gods), the God of

Calvin was not the same as the God of Channing : and the God of Mr. Spurgeon was not the same as the God of Dr. Martineau. It is a sheer delusion to say that they are ; and at last this is being perceived.

But now we have to face, one way or another, a question which will profoundly move the world during the next fifty years ;—the question of the Personality of God. The vast majority at present evade it, and go on talking of God as though He were simply a magnified man. But this cannot last. Let us face it, but with patience and caution, blended with resolution and courage.

We must begin somewhere ; and, if possible, somewhere where we can all agree. If we do this with perfect frankness, we shall find that we have no need to introduce anything novel. For instance, let us agree upon this obvious fact,—that we know nothing of God in Himself,—His mode of being, His substance, if one may use such an outrageous word concerning Him. We know Him only in and through His manifestations. These manifestations are external and internal,—in what we call ‘Nature,’ and in the inner self, the reason, the conscience, the affections, the spiritual instincts.

Another thing we can agree upon,—that He is in some way that which makes the Universe a Unity, the central Cause, the Fountain of the Universal Life, the eternal Formative Principle of the Universe,—the mysterious but ceaseless Power in Nature which ever works for Life, Harmony, Order and Righteousness. We can go no farther, but thus far we may go and must go. And why ? Because the more we know of the Universe, the more we see that Life, Harmony, Order and Righteousness are everywhere, and we know that poor little man had nothing to do with it all,—that this insignificant human race—insignificant before the unspeakable magnitudes and glories of the Universe—so far from being the master, is but the veriest beginner as a servant. By a deep intellectual necessity, therefore, we have to infer someone who is adequate for all this, since, by that intellectual necessity, we are bound to infer intention and power wherever we find such signs of order and harmony as we find in the Universe.

Now observe, that the question of Personality does not necessarily arise here at all. For all practical purposes of faith and life, obedience and service, this really suffices: and all that I have said may be so perfectly true and so perfectly inevitable that one might stop there, and say nothing about Personality. Nay, but the moment you begin to picture a Personality you begin to introduce difficulties, and, unless you are careful, you will introduce hopeless but inevitable confusion and impossibility. The more you picture a magnified man, a God on a great white throne, far away in some locality called 'Heaven,' the less will you be able to find Him anywhere but in that place; and the less will you be able to believe what Paul said, that 'He is not far from every one of us.'

Is it not plain, if we dare to think it out, that all this carries with it the negation of Personality in our common, limited and human sense? But it leaves entirely open the question of a Personality of an infinitely higher and intenser kind,—utterly incomprehensible but infinitely more real. In fact, it is *our* Personality that is in doubt. The Personality of God must be absolute and absolutely certain; only we have not the faculties for, in the slightest degree, comprehending it. All we know is that it must be entirely different from ours.

Dare to face the elementary idea of His omnipresence: and what will the result be? Omnipresence simply means everywhere present. We say that God hears our prayer in this Church; and we say that if some poor creature, alone and stranded in the wilds of Africa, cries to Him, at the same time, He hears; and we say that He hears the cry of the shipwrecked sailor on the lonely rock, and the cries and prayers of all His creatures all round the world, and from all the myriad worlds of space. I say that alone makes impossible, in relation to Him, our common, limited and human sense of personality. But it puts out the candle, only to give us the sun.

Many will say that this dissolves or dismisses God. Is that so? No, but it gives Him to us as we never had Him before. It suggests a nearness of God of the intensest kind, and a mode

of knowing Him more direct and more at first hand than ever. He is not the transcendent but the immanent God; not the 'Most High,' but the Most Inward. 'In Him we live and move and have our being,' and 'He is not far from every one of us.'

If, as I said, He is the mysterious Power in Nature which ever works for Life, Harmony, Order and Righteousness, then He is in every throb of life; He is the inmost upbearer of my being; He is the secret of these flowers. The pulse of the tiniest tide of life is not disconnected from Him. He is in every governing Law: and therein He holds me fast and will not let me go. When I find a Law, I find Him; I hear His command; I feel His hand; I am aware of Him and come into direct contact with Him.

He is in all the 'judgments' of Nature. Yes, 'judgments.' The old notions of 'God's judgments' were not entirely errors and superstitions. God is promulgating His judgments everywhere and at every instant: but not in any arbitrary way: only through the outworking of Natural Law. If you harbour filth, and spare water and work, fevers and plagues will come: not because God sends them from above to punish you, but as the verdicts of His laws upon our offences. His judgment seat is in the filth itself. In no other way do 'judgments' come, but in that way they do.

Do you not see how near that brings us to Him; and how worrying about the mode of His Personality, from the point of view of ours, will only hinder or lead astray?

It is here we may find the truth hidden within the legend of our childish days, that God keeps a book in which He writes down all we do and say. It is true, but that book is within ourselves—each thought records itself; each secret desire depicts its character; each passion makes its mark; each transgression leaves its scar. The writer of the Book of the Revelation was right;—

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Did the writer of that understand the spiritual truth? I think he did. He calls the book 'the book of life,' and tells us that each one will be judged by it, according to the things that were done. Yes; God accuses no one, judges no one; sentences no one; but every one will accuse and judge and sentence himself; for every one will have what he is.

Now I say that this thought of God is the natural and inevitable transformation of the old, and that, as such, it makes God intensely real, and brings Him absolutely and constantly near. It is the natural transformation of the old anthropomorphic idea of God because it represents the journey from matter to spirit, from the manifestation to the essence, from the human to the divine.

The old creeds are all breaking up. The old pictures are all fading. The old melodrama is nearly at an end. We need a meeting place on firmer ground, broad enough for us all, and sufficiently in the open to make possible the comradeship of those who have thought themselves into the wilderness. That meeting place is here. It will not at present be available or be largely sought. It may even be feared and hated, with more terror and passion, than any form of heresy: but the meeting place will stand. It can wait and it is strong.

So then, I say, we have at last found how to 'look through Nature up to Nature's God'—not by looking through Nature as through a window, to see God seated elsewhere, apart from us, but by looking through Nature to her beating heart, her essential life, to see the life behind the phenomena, the thought behind the life, and the love within the thought.

Thus regarded, there are no real antagonisms in Nature or destiny. All is of God and all is centrally good. There can be no failure, because there is no break in the order, no weakness behind the scenes. We are not in the hands of an arbitrary tyrant or a motiveless force: but now, as never before, we can say 'Our Father who art in heaven:' only now *the heaven is here*.

UNITY AND VARIETY IN RELIGION.

—
BY WILFRED VINER.
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I.

THE STUDY OF RELIGION.

Opposing currents are needful to keep the ocean fresh, and progress only takes place through antagonism. If we do not believe in the Divine permission of discord, we must acknowledge men are not yet framed for unity.—*Echo*.

IN our study of Universal Religion, unless we have made up our minds to believe in a Providence who has still 'a chosen people,' we cannot limit our horizon solely to the sphere of Christendom, we have rather to extend it to the circle of the globe, for religion covers so wide an area that it requires a telescopical as well as a microscopical examination.

We presume, at the outset, that religion relates particularly to a Spiritual Kingdom. As we want to conduct our inquiry on scientific lines, let us follow the guidance of a department of science which refers to another kingdom, the Vegetable Kingdom.*

We do not by any means intend to imply that there is anything further than a most partial analogy between religion and botany, but the method of study which deals with the distribution, origin, development and uses of plants, involving their classification into groups or classes, families or orders, genera or species, will enable us to review Universal Religion, as a whole, in such a way that the thread of our discussion will be continually perceived without the generals being confused with the details.

This arrangement, which is based upon the mathematical formula, 'the whole is equal to its parts,' will adapt itself to the groundwork of our argument, for we infer from it that diversity, as well as unity, is a form of the Law of Universal Evolution. As there are different classes and orders of plants, yet all are plants, so we conclude there are different classes and orders of religion,

* Following Hooker's Botany Primer.

yet all religions are religion. We recognise another form of the 'one and the many.'

The fundamental tenets that appear to be held in common by the leading religions of the world will then be traced in outline, followed by an examination of the lives of individual plants or personal religion, distinguishing their roots, stems, leaves, and the flowers that may become fruitful and reproductive. We shall then have ascertained the apparent essentials of a religious life.

II.

UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

There can be but one kind of Religion, as one ocean, the different names given to it indicating our partial conceptions or distinctions belonging to the thinker's mind, not to the religion itself.—THEODORE PARKER.

We view Universal Religion, in its general significance, as comprehending all the faiths and beliefs in the world. It represents, from this point of view, the totality of all the various religions, churches, creeds and causes, or their outward manifestations of a profession, with or without their practical influence on the lives of their adherents.

We do not seek to depreciate or undervalue the religions of our own country. With all the accretions of ages we may still consider the religion of Jesus stands to-day highest in the scale of Evolution, from an ethical standpoint. We only claim that, in all fairness, other religions, which are termed 'non-christian,' should be recognised as forms of Universal Religion. They were founded by great teachers, whose doctrines are recorded in books which are considered as sacred as our Bible. The ideas of Buddha, Confucius and Mohammed have consoled and moulded the lives of millions of their followers, and if we remember that their teaching has developed in a lower scale of civilisation, we may charitably look upon all the non-christian faiths as various forms of Universal Religion which are at the present time in a lower stage of Evolution.

The distribution of Religion.

By education most have been misled ;
 So they believe because they so were bred.
 The Priest continues what the Nurse began ;
 And so the Child imposes on the Man.

—DRYDEN.

We find throughout the human family a nearly universal profession or acknowledgment of some kind of religion.

To obtain a glimmering notion of the distribution and diversity of religion it may simplify matters to imagine a column of 100 men representing proportionately the leading faiths of the world, which according to some statisticians may be roundly computed in per centages as follows :—

- 25 Buddhists.
- 18 Chinese Religionists.
- 13 Hindu Religionists.
- 13 Mohammedans.
- 12 Roman Catholics.
- 7 Protestants.
- 5 Greek Catholics.
- 7 Heathen.

If this view is anywhere near the facts, we learn that over nine-tenths of the world are supposed to profess a religion ; seven-tenths the present-day religions of the east ; one-quarter of the whole, Christianity. One-half of the religionists incline to the worship of a God-Man.

All these religions are more or less ethnical, they are found to pertain to particular races. The obsolete religions of the world were grafted on nations that have ceased to maintain their national existence. The ancient beliefs of Egypt, Greece, Persia, and Rome, shared the destiny of the empires in which they appeared, and they are no more.

The religions of to-day are to a great extent ethnic ; Buddhism is the popular faith of the Mongolian race ; Christianity is the leading faith of the Circassians, and is found throughout Europe and the parts of the world ruled or colonised by Europeans ; the Hindu religions flourish in India ; the Chinese in China ; Mohammedanism amongst Turks and Arabs.

We conclude, from this racial distribution, that there is a universal tendency for mankind to

profess an adherence to the religions in which they have been trained.

At home or at school the youth of all nations are usually taught the faith of their parents and teachers. These early educational religious impressions are retained until maturity, when secular motives probably prevail. A dogmatic religion permeates the entire environment of most people. Public opinion and social custom encourage them to ostensibly countenance their national churches. They have to submit to clerical interposition at the critical stages of life, such as at births, marriages, and deaths,—so they conform to the customary ceremonials of their country in the ordinary way.

This common consent of humanity in reference to religion, which some view as an argument for its validity, is lightly valued by others who are prejudiced in favour of a particular faith. The apparent anxiety of the varieties to convert one another to one way of thinking leads us to suppose that most of the sections of our column of 100, and possibly some of the sub-divisions which we classify as genera and species, would put forward their claims to be the sole possessors of the true faith.

So those who profess Christianity are accustomed to look upon the other seven-tenths of the world as heathens. Even Christendom is 'divided against itself.' It deplores the existence of this diversity, although variety seems to be the charm of life.

The Roman Catholic one-eighth seek to proselytize the other seven-eighths. The so-called Protestant one-fourteenth want to convert the remaining thirteen-fourteenths. A considerable proportion of those who are statistically classified as Protestants, because they are not Roman or Greek Catholics, would indignantly resent the designation. The remainder, who accept the title of Protestant, representing say one-twentieth or one-thirtieth of the human race, are at variance, being split up into a hundred or more sects scattered over the world with their diversified creeds or tests of membership, church governments, and sectarian literature. They are clam-

ouring for a unity minus diversity, which in all probability was never intended to arise.

The sects and churches are apt to look upon their differences instead of discovering their resemblance. Protestants will not see that the fundamental doctrines of modern Christianity are held by the Roman Catholics, yet both these religious families agree in believing in a revealed religion that has come direct from a Providence, who, they assume, has left the inhabitants of less favoured countries in the dark on a matter of such universal importance.

The Origin of Religion.

God made Religion simple,—a thing for babes and sucklings; to comfort the dying cottager, to be a hope to the ignorant beggar.—*Times.*

The fables that assert the miraculous origin of religion, and the speculations that seek to trace its rise from the fetish worship of savage races, appear to be equally unwarrantable, for like other ancient institutions, the earliest forms of religion are necessarily involved in obscurity.

The germs of religion probably existed in pre-historic times; they had already grown when history opens. We may, however, safely infer that the origin of religion marks the first stage in that steady order of development which we meet with in every department of the Universe. Assuming that man thought out the subject for himself, we still may believe in the divine origin of religion, for it seems to be analogous to language. We may consider that God gave man the power of speech, and man developed language; so God gave man reasoning powers, and man developed religion! Man evolves religion because Providence left him to find it out in the same way that he was left to discover the method of kindling a fire and of clothing, feeding, and sheltering himself.

The origins of the principal systems of religion can be historically traced, for they all claim to be vouched by sacred documents. Most of these writings profess to be the inspired collections of the sayings of the great teachers who founded the faiths.

The oldest religion extant, Brahmanism, has

its Vedas and Puranas, the sacred books of the Hindus, which are supposed to be at least 4000 years old. The name of the founder of this faith is unknown. The Hebrew religion, founded by Moses about 3500 years ago, is based upon the part of our Bible that we call 'The Old Testament.'

The religion of Buddha, about 2500 years old, has his oral teaching recorded in a three-fold record collected by his followers. The religion of Confucius, who was contemporary with Buddha, is founded upon the writings of the great teacher and his relatives. The Christian religion, instituted by Jesus about 1900 years ago, has his oral teaching chronicled in the writings of the New Testament of our Bible. The Mohammedan religion, founded 1300 years ago by Mohammed, has the prophet's teaching in the Koran.

If we believe in a Providence who intended man, by the powers bestowed upon him, to originate inventions and discoveries, we can look upon all the revelations of revealed religion, whether oral or written, as revealing the efforts of the leading religious teachers of the world to introduce what they conceived to be beneficial to humanity. We can revere their teaching, for every great and good thought that has elevated mankind was surely inspired.

We need not infer that these teachers and writers received miraculous assistance, we may consider them as simply the instruments for the fulfilment of the divine purpose in a general way. We may view all the original forms of religion as containing the elements of truth, and accept all good teaching whether it be from the sacred books of the Hindus, the Chinese, the Arabs, or the Jews, for we shall find excellence at the sources, in spite of a degenerated development.

The Development of Religion.

Man made Religion complex and spun cobwebs of his own, then made laws round the broad and manifest law of God. In fact Religion is no longer a thing of grace, a home for the broken-hearted, a deliverance for the captives of any of those sweet things it was once reported to be. It is now all yelling and howling, abusing, stigmatising, denouncing, anathematising, sending men all round the wrong way, and for every imaginable reason.—*Times*.

The evolution of religion is essentially associated with the consideration of the stages through which humanity passed on its upward movement until it arrived at the acme of Monotheism. This course has been traced from primitive superstition through Nature-worship and Polytheism. With the growth of knowledge and experience, man rises from a conception of a plurality of wills, which he timidly fears, to a trust in a Higher Power, who is a Providence. In the search for an explanation of the wonders of nature, the germs of a religious life steadily developed, the apprehension of a spiritual realm constantly grew.

The progress of religious ideas can be traced through the ancient civilisations of Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome, until we arrive at the zenith attained through Judaism, which is the conception of a God who is a Providence and an exalted type of superior men, of moral excellence, of whom Jesus is the ideal to Western minds. This religion of Jesus, transplanted to Aryan soil, and modified by its combination with Greek philosophy and mythology, in spite of its degenerated development, seems to be the best moral disinfectant in the world at present.

We can follow the evolution of the literary religions of India and the Eastern world that have developed in a lower scale of civilisation, remembering that the peoples of China, Hindustan and other Asiatic countries have similar habits of life and methods of thought to their predecessors of centuries ago. We shall then understand why the faiths of the Easterns are comparatively inert, while the faiths of the Westerns are more vigorous in their diffusion.

All the religions founded by the great teachers seem to have deviated from the paths originally mapped out for them by their founders. It appears to be the rule that the magnetic influence of the master-mind attracts all towards a centre. When this attraction ceases, the harmony is dissipated. A study of the histories of the religions founded by Buddha, Confucius, Jesus and Mohammed proves the correctness of this rule of contrary development. Their primitive inspirations have become obsolete through the distorted inter-

pretations and manifold continuations of their followers.

If we incline to a theory of evolution that views history as the progressive curve along which events are circling, the starting point will sooner or later be reached again. So we may anticipate that with an advance in knowledge the races of the world, dissatisfied with a progress from the simple to the complex, will revert to the elementary fundamentals of their religious belief. Sacerdotalism, with its apparatus of temple and ceremonial, may decay, but religion may start afresh on a new cycle unfettered by the trammels of authority and the superstitious element by which it has been so long surrounded.

(To be continued.)

AN ALLEGORY AND A PROPHECY.

BY CARLETON F. BROWN.

It was in the borderland between waking and sleeping that these things happened, in those moments when we look down upon human life as from a realm elevated above it, when the most improbable things seem true, and when our real vexations and disappointments seem most improbable. There stood before me a man of noble grace, lofty brow and kindly eyes, which convinced one, in their first glance, of absolute sincerity and friendliness. He was not an angel with flowing robes and ridiculous feathered wings, and yet he seemed so different from men whom I had ever seen that at once I knew he must be a resident of some other world. Instinctively I put out my hand and cried, 'Welcome, brother!' I have said that this was at the time when the most improbable things seem perfectly natural; and so it did not occur to me to be in the least surprised when the stranger took my hand and replied in my own language: 'I bring you greeting from the dwellers on the star Alcestra.' I felt no fear or awe, for there was something so gracious in the stranger's manner that it awoke in

me at once the sense of comradeship. In reply to my questions he told me that he had been sent forth by the 'Society for Observing the Progress of the Universe'; that it was the custom of this society from time to time to send committees out to other spheres to make observations, and report them to the society; that on this occasion he had been especially assigned to make observations of the progress of religion. He related, furthermore, how in taking his way homeward by a different route from the ordinary, he had accidentally come across our earth, which had never been visited before, either by him or by any other member of his society, in their travels. Consequently he was greatly delighted with the opportunity afforded him of making entirely new investigations. He showed me a bulky package of memoranda which he had gathered from the last constellation visited, and displayed great eagerness to begin at once his inquiries as to religious conditions in our world. To his general question as to the progress which religion was making, I replied: 'You have come, dear brother, at a fortunate time. Within the last few years the Christian religion has been making great progress, especially in those countries where it was not previously known. It now bids fair to drive out all other religions.'

'You do not mean to say that you have more than one religion in your world?' he asked, in great surprise.

'No, of course there is only one true religion, the Christian; but there are many false religions, the Buddhist, Brahman, Mohammedan, Confucian, and so forth.'

'And what is the difference between them?' he asked with great interest. I tried my best to explain to him the difference, but he could not see that they were not all of them more or less true, though there were some things about each of them to which he objected. So I had to explain to him finally that the Christian religion was different from all others in that it had been given to mankind by a divine revelation.

'A revelation? What is that?' he asked. I had begun to notice a very strange thing about my friend. Although he seemed to be able to con-

verse with me with complete understanding in regard to some things, when it came to certain words, such as 'revelation,' 'miracle,' 'atone-ment,' he failed to understand me; but only when we spoke of hope, joy, brotherhood, truth, did he seem to comprehend.

'But is it not very strange,' he asked, 'that the Christians are unable to come to an agreement with the Buddhists and the rest, so that they can understand each other?'

'That would indeed be vastly better,' I returned, 'but for the most part these other nations refuse to accept Christianity.'

'But do you accept their religion?'

'No, for in them are included many traditions and superstitions.' But it seemed hopeless to explain the matter to my friend. He went on to ask whether the Christians had made a determined attempt to study these other religions and to see the truth in their teachings.

'No,' I answered, 'to be frank, we know very little about the other religions of the world, and we consider it a waste of time to study about them, when we have in our Bible God's own truth.'

'Ah, now I understand how it is that you have so many religions in your world,' he answered. 'Each one is sure that he is right, and so no one will listen to another.'

It was late the next day when my Alcestran friend returned, he having gone out to look around for himself, under agreement to come back to me for fuller explanation of what he observed. As he greeted me, his face lighted up with his rare brotherly smile, but I thought that I detected a shadow of perplexity which I had not before noticed.

'Well,' I cried, 'and what have you seen?'

'I have found in your city many churches,—is it not thus they are called, your places of meeting?—and they are all so small, and in some places so very near together. Why have you arranged them in such a manner? With us we prefer a large, central edifice of imposing appearance; or, when the population is too great for a single building, we erect one in each division of the city.'

I felt somewhat at a loss to explain our plan

of erecting churches to my friend. Once it crossed my mind that some sarcasm lurked behind his innocent questions. But a glance at his frank but perplexed countenance assured me that he was entirely serious. I told him that we had in our country more than a hundred denominations, and that each of those built separate churches and carried on their religion separately. He seemed more mystified than ever.

‘But I understood you to say that the only religion in this country was the Christian.’

‘To be sure, and each of these denominations claims to be Christian, but they all disagree when they attempt to define what Christianity is.’

‘But did you not say that the Christians had a book specially given to them by God, that they might know exactly what is true?’

‘Yes, they all indeed have the Bible, but they cannot agree among themselves as to what it means. In fact, at the present time the Bible is the chief cause of contention among them.’

‘And because they disagree as to the meaning of this book, they build separate churches and carry on their religion separately?’

‘How can they do otherwise?’ I asked somewhat impatiently, ‘they cannot all sign the same creed.’

‘Creed? I do not understand,’ he replied with a bewildered air.

‘Yes,’ I explained, ‘a statement of doctrine drawn up by each church, to which candidates for membership are required to give their assent.’

‘There is nothing of that sort with us,’ he replied. ‘We pledge ourselves only to seek and follow the truth, as each of us may understand it.’

‘But how do you distinguish between believers and unbelievers?’

My friend from Alcestra looked at me curiously while a quiet smile played over his face. He did not speak for several minutes, and then he began by saying that he was afraid he could not make me understand his way of looking upon such things. ‘In Alcestra,’ he continued, ‘there are no unbelievers, for there are no lines of exclusion. Every man must have a religion of some kind, and

we do not term them irreligious because their religion is not of our particular kind.'

He talked for some time of the underlying religious basis of life, and strove to show that in a universe such as ours, religion in some form or other must appear in all sentient and rational beings. But at length he checked himself. 'I came to make inquiries, not to discourse about the religion of Alcestra.' And he commenced again to ply me with questions, though I would far rather have listened to his explanation of a system of religion so different from our own.

In answering one of my friend's inquiries, I happened to mention the fact that our churches held regular services on Sunday only. He was astonished beyond measure. 'With us, our places of meeting are open every day. Children's voices are heard every afternoon in the choral service.'

'How do you induce them to attend?' I interrupted, with a dismal picture of empty seats in the Sunday School room in my mind.

'Induce them! They could not be kept away. At that service we hear the grandest and most inspiring music found anywhere. This service is familiarly known among us as the 'Soul-Freshener.' Then we have our various club meetings. Our Society for Observing the Progress of the Universe meets there twice a week, and there are other educational, literary and friendly clubs meeting every day.'

'Now that I think of it,' I said, 'most of our churches have prayer meetings during each week for fellowship and spiritual culture, though generally there are but few who attend.'

He immediately expressed a strong desire to see one of them, and I went with him that evening to the nearest one. To my relief it was a better meeting than usual. There were no long pauses during which the minister feebly implored the audience not to allow the time to be lost. On the whole I felt very well satisfied with its success as I walked home with my friend. Finally I ventured to ask his opinion.

'But where was the fellowship?' he asked. 'No one grasped another's hand; no one talked naturally or freely with another, nor inquired after

the other's welfare. It was a place of formal exercises, not of living confidences and loving comradeship. And most of the time was consumed in asking a person named "Lord" to do something for them.'

I stopped abruptly and looked straight in the Alcestran's face. 'Is it possible that you do not know what prayer is?'

'Prayer?' he replied. 'Is that what you call prayer?'

I was too deeply shocked to answer for some minutes. At length when we had again seated ourselves quietly at home, I said, 'My dear brother, you have asked me a great many questions. Let me now ask you one. You said that you were seeking to learn the religious condition and progress of our world. What do you mean by religion?'

'By religion,' he replied deliberately, 'I mean the great work, begun in the misty dawn of time, of bringing people together in one close-knit family, whose law will be justice, whose inspiration love, and whose fellowship will be the common search for truth.'

'But you would not leave God out of your religion?'

'Assuredly not; but what is "God" but the name, the symbol by which we denote the great universal laws of truth and justice and love that work through us and through all things? And so I felt to-night that those people who were beseeching God to grant His grace, His favour and His salvation, were wasting their time just as truly as if they had been beseeching gravitation to make each separate apple to fall from each separate tree, and each brook to flow through its valley. Gravitation always acts when the necessary conditions are complied with. So does God. If these people go on trying to help their neighbours, dealing justly in their business and laying hold of the truth within their reach, God will attend to the rest.'

'But is not God pleased by having us show our faith through asking Him for those things we need?'

'It seems to me a deeper faith to depend upon

the means which He has placed at our disposal—two hands when we need bread ; two feet when we would escape danger ; two eyes when we would be filled with the beautiful ; a mind when we wrestle with the problems of life.'

It was late when we separated that evening. At his request, I placed in his hands a copy of the Bible as he was leaving, assuring him that he would be better able to understand our religion after carefully perusing it.

(To be concluded.)

AWAKENING INDIA.

THE 'Prabuddha Bharata of awakened India' (Mayavati ; Kumaon, Himalayas) is doing good service, in that it is helping to crumble down the barrier walls between various forms of Theism, and to build up the larger fold for a greater Brotherhood. An interview with Swami Vivekananda results in the eager decision that converts to 'many-visaged Hinduism' must have full liberty to 'choose a religion for themselves,' 'for, unless a man chooses for himself, the very spirit of Hinduism is destroyed.' So then, Hinduism, according to that, is not a Religion, but a meeting-place. In a note by the Editor, appended to an article on 'Visishtadvaitism,' we find this, in the same vein ;—

The Advaita recognises the necessity and utility of all systems of belief. In its economy there is room for the most infantile expression of the spiritual hankering as well as for the loftiest flights of monistic speculations. It labours under no difficulty therefore when it meets with Dvaita or Visishtadvaita passages in the Srutis. Overzealous partisans of Advaita may have tortured these texts to serve their purpose ; but while it was incumbent upon the other schools to do so, to keep their heads high, the Advaita did not stand in need of such methods of procedure to preserve its natural supremacy. It is quite right that there should be easy steps in the Sruti to enable man to climb the tree of knowledge and that each step should be considered equally useful and important.

We remember hearing 'the Swami' teach in the same sense when, discoursing on the Vedas, he gloried in their seeming contradictions, or inconsistencies, and said that, in this way, they offered many gifts to men, so that each might find

his need supplied,—a lesson in humility and charity which many Christians might study with profit.

In another article, on 'The New Pantheism,' we find the following keen and suggestive thoughts concerning the hidden but urgent God ;—

'To define God is to deny him,' said Spinoza. There is a wise and significant point included in this remark. If, however, we look at the historic attempt on the part of universal humanity to define God from another point of view, we cannot help being impressed with the utter failure of humanity 'to deny him.' God still lives in the thought of man ; and he thus lives largely because of this very fact that man is forever trying to define him,—trying but miserably to fail. And, if after looking deeply into the tangled mysteries of philosophic and theological definitions, or of arrogant authority, one finds himself pessimistically inclined to say, 'There is no God,' he will only need to drop himself down from this high and, if you please, hazy region of speculation, to the plane of a common, everyday life in order to see, with Voltaire, that 'for the safety of society' we must not only be willing to 'invent a God,' but, as many would say, be ready also to enforce him.

The more rational way, however, to view the world's attempt (and failure) to formulate its varied and more or less antagonistic conceptions of the ultimate reality, in such a manner as to meet the universal human consciousness, is to regard it as the best possible proof that there is, in reality, a God, who, though past finding out, is, nevertheless, a constant challenge to the human understanding.

From this Journal we learn, with pleasure, that women are taking part in public missionary work, and that a certain 'Swami Abhayananda' has been lecturing in Madras and Calcutta, and it is said that people 'were charmed with her eloquence.'

BEATEN BACK.

DOES anybody really believe that our contention with the South African Republic is a contention of righteousness, 'unmixed with baser matter' ? The only honest men amongst those who have been getting up this quarrel with the Republic are the men who frankly say : 'You stand in our way : so clear out !' That is honest, though it means sheer blackguardly buccaneering.

But who can contemplate violence and bloodshed on the part of England for such a cause ? It

is too detestable for belief, and yet there are multitudes in the high places who long for it. They must still be watched and gripped. England is not yet a den of thieves.

But we do not believe in the possibility of a military assault upon the Republic. The British Government is very fond of disregarding the good old plea—'Hit one of your own size!' But there are exceptions: and this is one. If the Government were mad enough to fight for possession of the Transvaal, on the base and cowardly pretence that it wanted to right the wronged, there would be hell in South Africa—and perhaps from the 'Cape to Cairo.'

But we hope and believe we may say with confidence that the forces of greed and dishonour have been beaten back. There was danger of an official raid upon the South African Republic, any time since the Tory party came into power. It longed to 'revenge Majuba'; it hated the Republic; it had more than the average lust of power and greed; and it was quite willing to play the hypocrite or to break faith, in order to wipe out the Republic. Its affected pity for the poor Outlander, and especially its canting zeal for the franchise, only covered its design with a thin veil. But the moment the conscience of the country got wind of the real design and shewed fight, the game was up: and now the raid, we may hope, is impossible.

Only one danger remains. It is that the franchise may be worked by the raiders and financiers (much the same thing) to vote Kruger out and Rhodes in. But this will take time and trouble; and, besides, we are inclined to think that the poor suffering Outlanders may turn out to be less amenable to the whip and less responsive to the purse of these clever wire-pullers than some people expect.

But, up to date, splendid and successful work has been done for England's honour and the Republic's security.

COLONIAL OFFICE CANT.

THE following is an extract from a letter in *The Leeds Mercury*, written by a Dewsbury man who, for the past eighteen months, has been employed as an engineer at one of the mines in Johannesburg. The letter was sent to his parents:—

Do you see much in the home papers about the expected bother out here? We are full of rumours of coming troubles. England seems determined to force the Dutch to make some concessions. The Outlanders grievances are paraded daily in the papers, and give the impression that the poor Outlander is a most persecuted individual. What horrible rot! It is all a ruse of the capitalists. I have never seen an Outlander who had any grievance, and we are one and all (that is, the working men in the Transvaal) quite contented with things as they are, and if it were any other nation except England which wanted this country, they would find every man on the mine with a rifle in his hand ready for them. We can't fight against our own country, of course, but our sympathies are all with the Dutchmen. This is the freest country in the world, and we have much greater latitude here than ever would be allowed at home. And as regards the franchise, about which they make such a scream, we don't want it, and if we had it to-day, not one man in a hundred would use it, without it was to send a Dutchman to the Raad to keep the capitalist out.

The Dutch law favours the workman against the capitalist in every possible way. They refused to allow contracted labour, and rightly too. Some time ago the capitalists engaged a number of miners in England for 8s. a day to come out here. When they came they found that, instead of 8s. a day, other free miners received 20s. per day, and they were in a fix according to their contract. But the Boer Government came to their assistance and told them they were free men, as their law did not allow contracts to be made for labour abroad, and that they were free to make their own terms as they pleased, their written contracts not being worth the paper they were written on.

ENCOURAGEMENTS.

AMONGST the encouragements received by public men who face popular passions and try to curb them, must be reckoned the ferocious abuse they receive. It is strange that the hurlers of that abuse do not perceive the real effect of it:—the opposite of that they intend.

For instance, we have been attempting to prevent a great act of dishonour and a mean and wicked war. With what result? No one can

tell; but the side we have taken from the first is now almost certain to win. On the other hand, the insults and abuse have been very bitter. Here is a sample,—a post-card, beginning: ‘You ought to have been tarred and feathered and kicked out of this country years since, you . . . &c.’ One need not complete the loathsome sentence.

But that is really a greater encouragement than the kind and decent things which others have written; for it shews how much need there is for effort to curb furious and rowdy passions. If the writers of such cards were in Johannesburg, they would probably be helping on the very vices of temper and conduct which have caused all the trouble there. They are instructive object-lessons and ‘awful examples,’ and they immensely help us to persist.

NATURE-WORSHIP.

WE have far too little of Nature-worship and the vision of God in the mountain which soars, the forest that broods, the sea that sings, and the bush that burns with white and pink and golden fire. This, from *The Coming Light* has indeed light in it:—

The awakening to an appreciation of the beautiful in Nature has oftentimes an abruptness and fervour not unlike the ‘getting of religion’ at a camp-meeting. I was once with a small party who were climbing a wild trail in the Wasatch Mountains. My companion was a young woman who had always impressed me as totally lacking the sense of beauty in Nature. It was, therefore, with something of annoyance that I found her close to my side when we reached the top where the view was transcendent. To the right, a sheer cliff of white marble stood up in all the glory of a cloudless sunset, its mighty crest spired by the black points of the pines, and its base framed by the same dark setting.

So glorious was the vision that I stood entranced, forgetful of all but this stupendous revelation of color and light. A hand stealing into mine aroused me, and I turned in vexation. What was my astonishment to see the girl in question gazing awe-struck, her soul in her eyes and the tears raining down her cheeks. The next moment she had flung up her arms: ‘Father of Christ, how wonderful are Thy works!’ she cried, in a burst of emotion.

Her conversion was a genuine one. From that day she changed visibly, growing more spiritualised and refined, until two years later you would not have recognised in the tender thoughtful woman the coarse-grained girl of the previous period.

THE FRANCHISE IN 'RHODESIA.'

The Herald of Peace says;—

As to the causes of our quarrel with the Transvaal, a former dweller in Rhodesia, signing himself 'Lobengula,' writes to *The Star*, in regard to British Rhodesia, as follows: 'The Legislative Council of Rhodesia is a farce, which, if offered to the Uitlanders of the Transvaal, would be rejected with scorn. Had I your permission, Mr. Editor, I could a tale unfold about the tactics of the Chartered Company during the recent elections. Mr. Rhodes is far more stubborn than the President of the neighbouring Republic, but he has his reasons. Perhaps if Mr. Kruger gave way on the franchise question his country might gradually slip through his fingers, but in the case of Mr. Rhodes it is inevitable; the moment he gives the full and free franchise to the people of Rhodesia—the lack of which in the Transvaal was the ostensible cause of the raid—at that moment will the people commence to throw off the oppressive yoke of officialdom and toadyism which now permeates all, from the managers to the coloured office-boy, and from that time forward will the Chartered Company lose the hold they have on their country; the administration will be for the people by the people, and not by a gang of toadies for the benefit of a company. We shall yet see a huge petition from the people of Rhodesia praying Her Majesty's Government to release them from their present unhappy lot, and do for them what they have pledged themselves to do for the Uitlanders in the Transvaal.'

Will the nation, at the invitation of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir A. Milner, go to war to compel the Boers to do what the British would not think of doing? Meanwhile the condition of things in South Africa is most ominous. There seems a determination on the part of the Colonial Office to make the continuance of Peace impossible, and, in effect, to do by other means what the Jameson raid failed to accomplish. Do the people of this country realise what is afoot, and that the success of the present method would involve a crime as great as that which they repudiate? It would, in fact, be a more colossal crime. For the raid, had it succeeded, would have been a snatch affair, involving at most the loss of only a few lives. This will be a deliberate holocaust in which the forces of the Empire will be employed to carry out a plan of wholesale massacre, and in which the war, if successful, will involve terrible losses to the victor. Why should it be persisted in? It is not necessary to discuss the merits of the quarrel. Whatever they may be, the Transvaal Republic has repeatedly asked that they may be referred to Arbitration; our Government has as often contemptuously refused. To persist in war under the circumstances will be not only most criminal, but will involve such a violation of the laws of righteousness that must inevitably recoil upon the Empire. The minister that cannot preserve peace under such circumstances is guilty of high treason. To an impartial looker-on it would seem as if there were contemplated a repetition of the raid, by the means of diplomacy leading up to war, and with no greater justification than the raid itself had.

PUBLIC LETTERS TO PUBLIC PEOPLE.

TO THE INDEPENDENT AND HONEST FOLK AT VICTORIA,
AUSTRALIA.

So you have offered men and material to help the British Government to destroy the little South African Republic! Are you quite sure you have done well? If the South African Republic goes under, the Orange Free States will also be crushed, and the Parliament and Executive of Cape Colony will be pushed on one side.

Are you aware that the Prime Minister of Cape Colony has declared that the offer of the Republic is satisfactory, and ought to be accepted, and do you know that, because of this, a leading London newspaper advocate of war suggests a '*coup d'état* in the Cape Parliament,' 'the summary dismissal of Mr. Schreiner's Cabinet,' and the arbitrary creation of 'a Loyalist Government,' over the heads of the electors? How does that affect you? Have you been believing the inventions or gross exaggerations of pushing officials or interested speculators, backed up by the Hooligans here (both those of Pall Mall and the Old Kent Road), who always like a row, especially when there is anything to be grabbed?

Multitudes of honest people here think that some one has been fooling you. Had you not better look into it? The people who, under the pretence of redressing grievances, are trying to ride rough shod over Cape Colony and to wipe out two independent Republics, would ride rough shod over you, or wipe you out, if you stood in their way. Make no mistake about that.

No: if you help at all, you ought to help the Colony and the Republic to resist aggression; you ought to stand up against masterful injustice and merciless greed.

July 14, 1899.

J. PAGE HOPPS.

NOTES ON BOOKS.

'THE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF MORAL LESSONS.' By F. J. Gould. London: Watts & Co. A very noticeable little book, with about 40 chapters on all the great moral and social subjects, abounding in stories of a high order and alive with knowledge, insight and experience. Mr. Gould deliberately keeps out all reference or appeals to the great unseen causes and motives. We have not seen the word 'God' in the book, and have not noticed anything that suggests an Unseen order. For all that we greatly like the book. It is clean and sweet and wise. It might keep a sensible teacher going for a good many months.

'MAHA-BHARATA: THE EPIC OF ANCIENT INDIA.' Condensed into English verse by Romesh Dutt, C.I.E. London: J. M. Dent & Co. This very ancient poem is, of course, a notable curiosity, but we find neither joy nor edification in its tale of woe, crowded as it is with lust of anger and lust of

blood. The extracts are given in the metre of 'The Lord of Burleigh' and 'Locksley Hall,' but we find the metre as monotonous as the bloodshed, and soon tire of both.

'THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL.' A new English translation, with Explanatory Notes and Pictorial Illustrations. By C. H. Toy, LL.D. London: J. Clarke & Co. This new volume of 'The Polychrome Bible,' though uncoloured, is a specially welcome contribution to this most important series. Dr. Toy, though not very well known in this country, has, in America, a high reputation for sound scholarship and critical skill: and both are distinctly manifest in these interesting pages. Only one thing is wanting;—a frank and well-informed exposition of the real nature of Ezekiel's mysterious book. The honest truth is that it is an exceedingly precious specimen of ancient Spiritualism. Its visions, its trances, its symbols, its seances, its spirit-messages, have only one explanation, and we are sorry to see that the key is not here.

But, as far as it goes, it is in every respect excellent. The translation is fresh and vivid, the notes are full and minute, and the illustrations are unusually good. It certainly surpasses anything of the kind hitherto attempted. But the whole enterprise deserves the most serious attention.

'PRESIDENT JOHN SMITH. THE STORY OF A PEACEFUL REVOLUTION (written in 1920).' By F. W. Adams. Chicago: C. H. Kerr & Co. There is a touch of the fantastic in the title of this book, and a setting of romance in the book itself, but, taken as a whole, it is as serious as Life and as stern as Death. The story here told of the misery of the people of America during the past five and twenty years is hardly believable, but it is true, and the world ought to know it. But this masterly writer does not content himself with telling a miserable story: he grapples with causes and follows the trail of effects; he collars folly, confronts cruelty, and tries to get at a remedy for widespread misery and threatening revolution. It is a strong book and deserves very grave attention indeed, not only in America but here.

'AN ENGLISH-SOUTH AFRICAN'S VIEW OF THE SITUATION. WORDS IN SEASON.' By Olive Schreiner. London: Hodder & Stoughton. Is there any need to beseech every reader of THE COMING DAY to get this thrilling awakening book and read it—one might almost say—'in the fear of God'? It is a very touching and solemn appeal to the people of England on a subject that deeply concerns its honour, and that may possibly concern its standing in the world. We will say no more. The nominal price of the book is only one shilling.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

CAMPAIGN FUND.—It may be as well to say that the Editor of *THE COMING DAY* does all his work, not only for nothing, but at a slight loss every month. Moreover he is continually giving copies away free, and sending free copies by post. Last month, for instance, he posted a copy to every member of Parliament,—a rather costly bit of work. If any ‘well-to-do’ people, who like *THE COMING DAY*, and who think it is doing a good work, care to help, they may send to the Editor, at Rushworth, Ashburton Road, Croydon.

RIGHTEOUSNESS ALL ALONG THE LINE.—Some of our friends do not like the compound in *THE COMING DAY*; but the blend is deliberate. ‘Such is life!’ We want to ‘hold the mirror up to Nature.’ We want to bring all things close together, and to make one passion for righteousness throb through them all: and of this we may be certain that if what we call our ‘Religion’ has to be kept separate from, say, our Politics, there is something wrong with one or the other or both.

THE GOODWILL OF THE BUSINESS.—We have often pointed out that the crux of the Church question is The Church and not the endowments. What the astute Churchman wants is possession,—under the State if possible, but any way possession. So, of course, thinks the long-headed Bishop of London, who lately said: ‘The question has been raised whether it is worth while having a national Church, and that must always be an open question, depending on a consideration of the advantages and disadvantages. For myself personally, I would rather see the Church Disendowed than Disestablished.’

The good bishop evidently knows his business. He concluded by saying: ‘We have differences of opinion in the Church, but we are all bound together by the highest of all aims. Differences are inevitable, but I hope we can differ in opinion without differing in spirit, and that we may be able to keep “the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.”’

Excellent: But now when will the bishop help those who are trying to get the Acts of Uniformity repealed?

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—There is a special meanness in Mr. Chamberlain’s fighting, which always has made him an unpleasant as well as a dangerous opponent. He fights to win anyway. This characteristic came out in his late malicious suggestion that South African Republic Secret Service money was spent in this country to pay advocates of the cause of the Republic. We believe that this is simply one of Mr. Chamberlain’s wild-cat scratches, with no real thought behind it. In our opinion it is absolutely untrue. We know at least two advocates of England’s honour and the Republic’s safety who have suffered loss on account of it.

Perhaps, the knowledge that money is freely spent here and elsewhere to buy support for Rhodes and his gang may

have suggested that chance scratch to Mr. Chamberlain. There was a time when Mr. Chamberlain had at least a glimmer of the fact that men *can* work and suffer for conscience's sake.

'ONWARD! CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS.'—*The Christian World* has a rowdy sort of an own correspondent at Johannesburg. He indulges, of course, in the usual conventional formalities, such as 'Nobody desires war,' 'We trust that peace may be preserved,' 'Don't nail his ear to the pump,' and so forth (even Chamberlain can cant like that!): but the following bit of brutality really indicates the animus of all he has written,—

'The winter is here now. There is no natural fodder for horses. Streams are dry. The veldt is cold. Let eight more weeks pass by, and Nature will impose barriers to England's aggressiveness much more formidable than man can devise. Were these things, and above all, were the infinite capacity for scheming possessed by the Boer, better understood in England, definite action would be greatly expedited.'

In plain English:—'Look sharp, Chamberlain! Bring that row to a head, and get your men in!' A lovely counsellor for a Christian world!

HELPING THE BULLY.—*The Standard*, with curious pride, draws attention to the fact that, in addition to the Colonies, certain of our dependants are offering to help us wipe out the little South African Republic: and *The Standard* apparently revels in the degrading offer. It says, 'The Feudal Princes of the Malay Peninsular have offered 300 of their fine corps of Malay guides': and this, says *The Standard*, with stately pride, should remind Mr. Kruger how gigantic and widespread are the resources of the Power he dares to defy. Is there not something painfully vulgar about all this big bullying? But fancy these poor ignorant dependants offering to help one of the greatest powers in the world to make other people dependant! And fancy the great power thanking them for the offer, and seeming to be proud of it! Could Gilbert and Sullivan make anything of it?

AMERICA'S MISTAKE.—Captain Gustave Schaaf, writes thus from Manila, respecting the miserable slaughter of the Filipinos;—

'I do not feel it an honour to war with these people. Of course, we are here and will do our duty, a duty that has been forced upon us by some of the so-called statesmen that should at this particular time be in our places. It is a burning shame, and the United States must forever feel it. I have seen men die that were too good to be put up as targets for a half-civilised people, all on account of blunders made by a civilised nation like ours.

'The war we enlisted for is over. We enlisted in a war in the cause of humanity, or at least so we were led to believe. Now we are trying to take from a people what the American forefathers fought for—*independence*. Is this humanity? If it is, I fail to grasp the idea.'

THE PASSAL-TREE.—*The Two Worlds* tells this story; 'A Wesleyan minister in Lincolnshire preached a sermon on the text, "I will praise Him on the psaltery and the harp." He pronounced Psaltery as "Passal-tree," and proceeded to explain to his people what it meant. He said, "David had a beautiful house with a verandah to it, up which grew a beautiful Passal-tree, with boughs and thickly-leaved branches, and David was wont to get into this Passal-tree, and play on the harp praises to God before all the people, and this is what is meant by the words of my text."'

We have always understood that some Wesleyan preachers were very imaginative and picturesque.

SPRIGS OF ROYALTY.—Many Americans have a very sentimental side for 'royalty,' but an American has been summing it up, and it comes out like this;—'Queen Victoria is said to have seventy living descendants. If each one of the seventy should be as prolific as their great ancestress and her children, it is evident that in a few years the British islands would not hold them all. In three generations they would amount to nearly 25,000,000, and the chances are that in five generations every inhabitant of England would be of royal descent through at least one ancestor.' But where will the common people go?

THE LONDON PRESS.—Some of our readers may have thought we are rather hard upon, say, *The Sun*. What do they think of this? It is the opening sentence of a prominent leader:—'The decision of Oxford to confer the degree of Doctor of Civil Law upon Mr. Cecil Rhodes is excellent and is thoroughly in consonance with the best traditions of the University.'

Could anything surpass the vulgarity, the ignorance and the impudence of that? Does the person who wrote that know what a University is, and what really are its traditions? Now that is the sort of wild nonsense poor London is fed with day after day by half-a-dozen widely-circulated papers; and the majority take it all in, and believe it.

But it is only fair to *The Sun* to say that its rowdy remark was justified by the rowdy undergraduates.

SCHOOLS AND WAR.—*The Educational Review* quotes a refreshing article from the 'Pädagogische Zeitung.' It appears that the German Peace Societies have lately petitioned the Government that in future, in all the schools of the country, the history-lesson may deal with the progress of learning and civilisation rather than with the story of fighting and fighters, and that school-books may be carefully revised from this point of view. The author of the article writes hopefully of the movement, without, however, minimising the difficulties in the way. But, he argues, just as men have come to submit their private wrongs to the arbitration of others, so nations will some day come to submit theirs—a consummation that may be hastened by wise action on the part of the schools.

To-day they set up a false ideal—'Die Helden des Krieges werden noch immer an die erste Stelle gestellt.' This must be altered: the heroes of war must give way before the heroes of peace, and a human ideal be substituted for a brutish.

The Educational Review seems to approve of this. What we should like to hear is that all Associations and Unions of *teachers* had petitioned the Government in the above-mentioned sense.

TREBLE X.—It is actually a 'Christian' paper which tells this story;—'Some time ago a resident in Dublin entertained an old Presbyterian minister, who was rather short-sighted, and who liked to prowl about the city by himself. On returning home one evening his host found him reading the Bible, and the minister exclaimed: "I can't make it out at all. I have read Genesis xxx. twice over, and I am none the wiser." He explained that a large portion of the shops in Dublin had "Genesis xxx." inscribed on them. "Genesis xxx.!" exclaimed his host in astonishment. "Whatever do you mean?" "Oh, it's all over the place,—on the walls and even on the barrels," said the minister. Then his host laughingly said, "Why, you mean Guinness XXX!"'

HOW IT GROWS.—This from *Judge* (New York) explains it;—

'Our Growing Needs.—Uncle Joshua: "We've got to have some more coaling-stations."

Uncle Jedediah: "What do we need 'em fer?"

Uncle Joshua: "Why ter accommodate our navy. We're goin' ter have a bigger navy, ye know."

Uncle Jedediah: "A bigger navy? We don't need that, either."

Uncle Joshua: "We don't? How'd we defend our new coaling-stations then?"'

THE MATERNITY SOCIETY.—This hopeful little Society, to which we have already referred, sends us its second Annual Report. The basis of the Society is what its friends call 'right living,' *i.e.*, living according to the ideas of Vegetarians. But there is more in it than that. These good people are Humanitarians, and their influence must be for good. The Report says;—'Up to this date there are 60 maternity cases on the books: 54 provident and six free patients; four have been attended by a doctor and mid-wife; 25 by the mid-wife. In three cases the mid-wife has applied for medical help'

Its honorary consulting medical officer says; 'The Maternity Society appeals for help for those mothers who in the drudgery of an over-burdened home are poor and weary, and who are cut off from the gentler joys of motherhood.

'Living from hand to mouth, often in a single room, with scant time to lie up, and with the burden of living always present, they appeal to every woman's heart to give them, at

such a time at least, a sense of security, that all that human knowledge can do, shall be reverently provided for them as an offering at the shrine of motherhood.'

'CONSCIENCE!'—A certain American has been writing on the territory vulgarly known as 'Rhodesia.' He glorifies the great rowdy and says, 'The Mashona, the Matabele, the Bechuana, must be compelled to work under strict task-masters, exacting obedience.' In plain English, they must be made slaves. He adds: 'And this is "The White Man's Burden."' So shall the Mashona and the Matabele, like the American Redskin and the Australian Bushman, give place to a people who march in the van of the world's enlightenment and conscience.' 'Conscience'! He actually brackets Rhodes and conscience! and he is an American!

CONSCRIPTION. — Our pushful Government has taken another step towards conscription or enforced service in the army. We are glad of it. This ought to shew the folly of the Jubilee Jingo road along which we have been going, and the desirability of returning to the good old path of 'Peace, Retrenchment and Reform.' Our glorification of soldiers and their loathsome work cannot fail to end in degradation and danger.

ANTICHRIST.

NOT Baal, but Christus-Jingo! Heir
 Of him who once was crucified!
 The red stigmata still are there,
 The crimson spear-wound in the side;
 But raised aloft as God and Lord,
 He holds the Money-bag and Sword.
 See underneath the Crown of Thorn,
 The eyeballs fierce, the features grim!
 And merrily from night to morn
 We chant his praise and worship him,
 Great Christus-Jingo, at whose feet
 Christian and Jew and Atheist meet.
 A wondrous god! most fit for those
 Who cheat on 'Change, then creep to prayer;
 Blood on his heavenly altar flows,
 Hell's burning incense fills the air,
 And Death attests in street and lane,
 The hideous glory of his reign.
 O Gentle Jew, from age to age
 Walking the waves thou could'st not tame,
 This god has ta'en thy heritage,
 And stolen thy sweet and stainless name,
 To him we crawl and bend the knee,
 Naming thy Name but scorning thee!

ROBERT BUCHANAN.